

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE AIRPORT COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Airport Commission convened in a regular session on Thursday, March 8, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Fitch, Glass, Jacobsen, Johnson, Orpe, and Chairperson Donnellan.

Absent: Commissioner Hsiao.

Also Present: Business Manager Williams, Deputy Community Development Director Cessna, and Environmental Quality Officer Colclasure.

MOTION: Commissioner Glass moved to grant Commissioner Hsiao an excused absence for the March 8, 2012 Airport Commission meeting. Commissioner Orpe seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Orpe led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner Fitch, seconded by Commissioner Glass, moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2012

MOTION: Commissioner Jacobsen moved to approve the February 9, 2012 Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Fitch seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Hsiao).

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

6A. Commissioner Fitch announced her mother's 98th birthday on March 9, 2012.

7. ACTION ITEMS: None.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

8A. AERONAUTICAL OPERATIONAL INFORMATION UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Chairperson Donnellan noted that the following reports for March 2012 were included in agenda materials: Hangar and Tiedown Rental Status, Ongoing Projects,

March Meeting Room Schedule, Hangar Waiting List, January 2012 Events Requiring Emergency Response, and Airfield Operations Status.

Business Manager Williams reported that there are no hangar vacancies and noted a supplemental Report 5: Events Requiring Emergency Response for the month of February 2012.

8B. LAND MANAGEMENT REPORT – AERONAUTICAL: None.

8C. NOISE ABATEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT: None.

8D. DISCUSSION OF FIXED WING AIRCRAFT TURNING LEFT PRIOR TO SHORELINE

Business Manager Williams introduced the item and noted Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian's letter to Commissioners in the material of record.

Commissioner Fitch left the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

The Commission welcomed Richard Root, Via Buena Ventura, who provided a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation "Early Left Turns After Take Off." He cited Torrance Municipal Code (TMC) Section 51.2.3 that states that aircraft taking off to the west shall not turn left until they have reached the ocean or attained an altitude of 1,500 feet as well as the Noise Abatement brochure stating "No turns prior to shoreline" and "Maintain runway heading." He discussed possible reasons why the early left turn rule was adopted in 1958 and noted that a runway "No Turns" sign for noise abatement was removed in 2009 and never replaced.

He described the three types of take offs: Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), Missed Approach Procedure, and Visual Flight Rules (VFR). He noted that IFR is not a problem but that Missed Approach Procedure always violates the rule, is directed by the Tower, occurs 0-7 times a day, and is under review by the Helicopter Committee. He stated that with VFR, the largest percentage of take-offs, the pilot decides where to fly and that many turn left too early. He noted that reminder letters are sent only if there is a citizen complaint and if the aircraft is south of Pacific Coast Highway and under 1,200 feet. He stated that there is no corrective action taken if the turn is approved or directed by the Tower, for Missed Approach Procedure, or if the aircraft cannot be identified.

Mr. Root showed examples of five improper VFR take offs on January 26, 2012 that did not meet staff criteria to send letters. He presented an example of an early left turn that bisected two noise monitors thereby reducing the decibel level as well as one showing two aircraft off course at the same time. He showed violations that he observed and recorded on a part time basis in the 4th quarter of 2011 using the LAX Web-Track system: Missed Approach Procedure—38, Did Not Meet Staff Criteria—56, Met Criteria—25, and Letters Sent—17.

He discussed training in the south pattern and safety concerns when aircraft turning left cross helicopter paths. He questioned why the Tower approves downwind left departures when it violates the City's noise abatement take off rules. He recommended more enforcement, changing the criteria to 1,500 feet, replacing the runway sign, increasing pilot awareness, updating the website, listing violations on quarterly Noise Abatement reports, and asking the Tower not to approve south pattern training and downwind left departures.

Hope Witkowsky, Mesa Street, expressed concern about aircraft flying so low over her residence that it is ruining the quality of her life. She questioned why it has taken so long to resolve the issue and urged the Commission to encourage pilots to fly friendly, take action, and make recommendations to City Council.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that the 1,200' criteria allows for margin of error and described how aircraft are identified. She explained that IFR is identified on Web-Track by N number but the other cases involve listening to Tower communications to learn the full N number. She pointed out that half a person staffs the Noise Abatement Center and recommended fly friendly education and better communication with the Tower. She pointed out that FAA directions and federal regulations supercede City procedures and that letters are not sent out if staff hears Tower instructions to turn early.

Judy Brunetti, Greenmeadows Avenue, Co-President of Riviera Homeowners Association, stated that all parts of the Riviera are affected by intrusive noise from fixed wing and helicopter aircraft. She recommended instituting fines for violations and stricter compliance with TMC.

Thurman Elliott, Sea Breeze Avenue, Rancho Palos Verdes, suggested that people made poor judgment when they purchased their homes near an airport. He stated that pilots have to follow FAA and Tower directions and that often there are safety of flight issues such as fog banks. He stated that helicopters are encroaching on fixed wing aircraft patterns and that the Tower does an excellent job of separating aircraft.

Dave Ouwerkerk, Iris Avenue, pointed out that winds often push airplanes off runway headings and that sometimes it is necessary to turn early to avoid clouds or fog banks. He stated that there is going to be variability and pilots are given the ultimate responsibility and command to make judgments.

Eve Reymond, Via Buena Ventura, maintained that noise has increased significantly in the last five years and that sending reminder letters is not enough.

James Casey, Camino de las Colinas, stated that on January 29, 2012 in a two-hour period he observed 14 fixed wing aircraft and two helicopters fly within a couple hundred feet from his house at a level of 70-80 decibels. He expressed concern about quality of life and requested that the runway sign be replaced.

Bill Tymczyszyn, Mesa Street, noted and entered into record his comments regarding take offs and landings. He stated that Tower controllers enforce FAA regulations, not TMC, and that most pilots are not aware of every City's rules that they fly over. He questioned #2 in Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian's letter regarding the south pattern as he has observed aircraft using it when there is no aircraft in the north pattern, adding that he was advised by the Tower that it is up to the City to encourage. He recommended resolving issues with the FAA and pointed out that the aviation section of the TMC is outdated and not worth enforcing.

Barry Jay, Brian Avenue, President of Torrance Airport Association, stated that enforcing the City's rules is impractical and irrelevant because most pilots fly within FAA regulations. He stated that the Association would encourage pilots to fly friendly and pointed out that it is often difficult for pilots to determine when they are at the shoreline.

Mr. Root recommended that the City ask the FAA for help with noise abatement issues, approve additional resources for the Noise Abatement Center, and ask for volunteers to assist staff.

In response to Commissioner Jacobsen's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna stated that a file is created for an aircraft when a letter is sent out but that there is currently no mechanism to go beyond the fly friendly letters. She pointed out that most violators are transient and that based pilots try harder once they are made aware. She stated that she would follow up on the suggestion to replace the runway sign.

Environmental Quality Officer Colclasure stated that 80-90% of violators are transient pilots who are not aware of the procedure. She stated that the few repeat offenders are asked to call the Center and that the main reason given for early left turns are to avoid traffic or drifting.

Commissioner Glass suggested that the Airport Association and Riviera Homeowners Association meet with Mr. Root and bring back recommendations. He pointed out that the Helicopter Committee has been waiting for months for a response from FAA regarding helicopters and that it might be better to resolve this issue in-house.

Ms. Witkowsky stated that a representative from FAA attended every Helicopter Committee meeting and suggested working with them to find a resolution.

Deputy Director Cessna suggested opening lines of communication with the Tower Chief and working with the Pilot's Association.

Mr. Jay suggested sending fly friendly letters to the flight schools, the Airport's tenants, and their tenants.

Julian Chasin, Via Los Miradores, suggested educating transient pilots by placing a flier in the cafeteria, sign on the wall, and installing the runway signage.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 8:27 p.m., Commissioner Glass moved to adjourn the meeting to Thursday, April 12, 2012 in the West Annex meeting room at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Donnellan so ordered.

Approved as Amended April 12, 2012 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
